

Tent over controversial flower stand cut down

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my own. I pay rent and I pay security guards at night. That's an expense I don't think they (other business owners) have."

Hesano says his prices are competitive with other similar businesses in the Farmington area.

"People shop here because they like the open air. I offer good prices, quality and service," he said.

Meanwhile, city staff are expected to report back with a review of the ordinance within 30 days.

Chamber officials and some city officials say the intent of the ordinance was for tent sales, for example, or charity functions, fund-raisers and emergency situations.

Hietrich told the city council April 22 he doesn't believe the ordinance was designed to provide a "loophole" for some to avoid complying with certain requirements and regulations faced by other businesses.

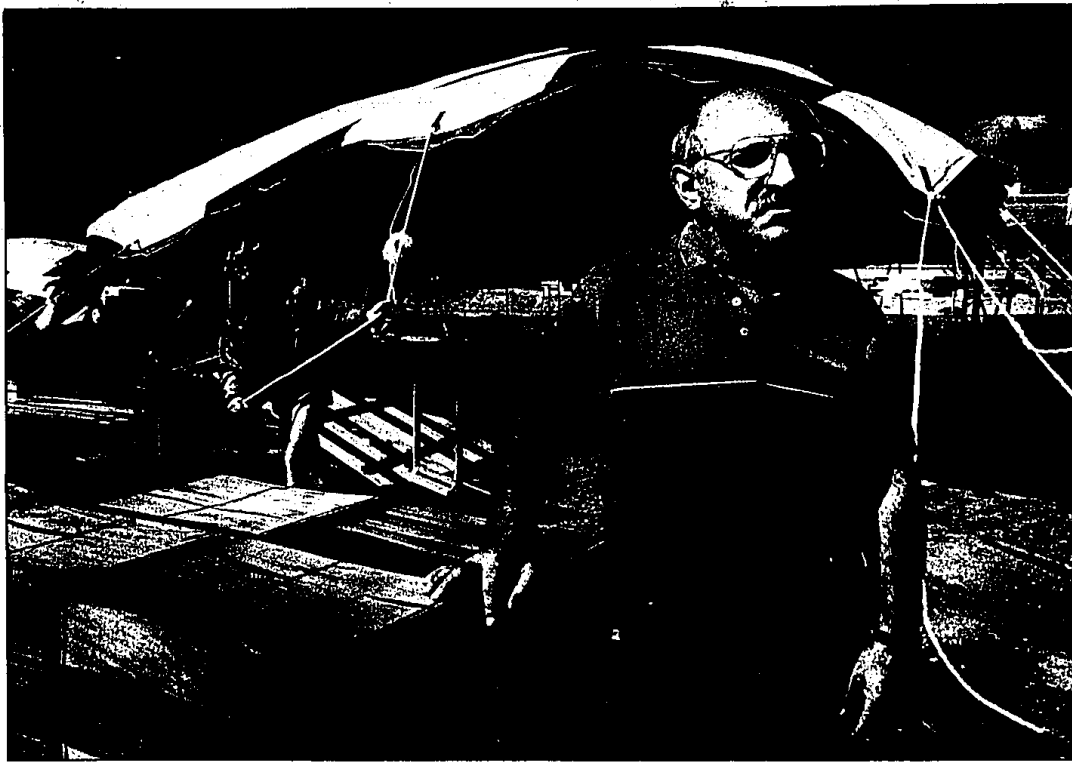
The ordinance, which allows temporary uses, doesn't specifically distinguish between giving such permits to charities and fund-raisers or business-type operations, city planner Ed Gardiner said.

It's possible, Hesano said, that his request for another temporary permit for a similar flower stand at Drakeshire Lanes, 35000 Grand River, may have ignited the concern in the business community.

In the five years he's been doing business at the Northwestern Highway-14 Mile corner, Hesano has never had a problem, zoning or code violations. City staff have petitions from residents supporting his flower stand. They also have petitions opposing his operation.

He has a similar stand in Waterford where, like in Farmington Hills, he's never had a problem until recently when the business community stood up to complain.

"I never had a reason to believe people would be opposed," Hesano said. "I think this is a concerted effort on the part of the florist industry to put a stop to transient merchants."



Ray Hesano of West Bloomfield was shocked when he arrived at the corner of Northwestern Highway and 14 Mile Tuesday morning where his flower stand

has stood for five years to find that someone cut the ropes holding his new tent. Hesano blames members of the Farmington-area business community,

who oppose seasonal businesses, such as Hesano's flower stand.

SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Rennels wants 3rd term on board

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year term on the 7-member non-partisan board.

Rennels said she is concerned about the trauma to the staff and programs in the district because of recent state budget cuts and the layoff of 84 teachers, with the promise of more employee cuts to come.

But she also tries to see the good. "It looks all gloom and doom right now, but there are some opportunities," she said. Things like consideration of year-round school programs — which could save the district money — plus other ideas stemming from gifted and secondary education reports can also be implemented with little money, she said.

RENNELS MAINTAINS an interest in state-level issues, and sees a lot of concern over things like property taxes in her banking career. Mortgage applicants, for example, see the state's high property tax rates and "it just knocks them silly," she said. "There's no doubt we pay too many property taxes. They're too high. But the way to do it isn't to just lower the property taxes. There has to be a very thorough discussion."

The mother of two Farmington schools graduates and a 19-year resident of the Farmington area, Rennels has made a career of being a community-minded politician.

Although active and visible in the Democratic party, she said non-partisan seats, such as those on local

school boards and city councils, are what makes the community tick. "It's nonpartisan that serves the community the best," she said.

Rennels' involvement began years ago with band boosters and softball coaching, moved into state-level involvement with groups like League of Women Voters and Common Cause, and eventually led her win two terms on the school board. While helping to organize the state's Common Cause, Rennels spent half a dozen years working towards the passage of Michigan's Open Meetings and Freedom of Information acts.

Those activities, plus an overall interest in children's issues, brought her to start attending school board meetings, then, to run for the board. "The school was the place to bring

this all together," she added. "I was just concerned and curious."

During her tenure, she has served twice as school board president. A November 1988 auto accident hospitalized her for several days and out of work for several months, but she missed only two board meetings. Although the elected job keeps her busy, Rennels still finds time for piano lessons, doing some hiking and gardening and reading a variety of books.

Her eight years on the board "involved much longer hours than I ever dreamed," she said. "The time has been the biggest downside. The up side has been taking problems and working through to solutions. "I'm really proud of what we've done."

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